



Media Release

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Arkansas Department of Human Services Announces Intentions to Change Foster Parent Requirements

The Arkansas Department of Human Services announced its plan today to discontinue the process of putting language on cohabitation into policy and instead propose new policy that allows workers the flexibility to make decisions on a case by case basis.

“Throughout this process we listened to many people including those with whom we do casework and the public regarding the needs of foster children,” said John Selig, DHS Director. Recognizing that this is a sensitive societal issue, it’s important to expand our recruitment base so that we can find a family that best meets the needs of every child.”

The Department will immediately begin the process of proposing the new policy for inclusion in the standards for family foster homes and will ask the Child Welfare Licensing Agency Review Board to amend its minimum licensing standards to reflect the new practice. The Department will offer the proposal according to the Administrative Procedures Act which will include a separate comment period for the new policy.

“I was delighted to hear that all those who commented during the public hearing felt as though our staff were the best assessors of what a home should look like, regardless of where they stood on the issue,” added Selig. “It’s encouraging to see so much community interest in foster children since that’s the primary resource for finding good homes in which to raise children in state custody.”

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PROPOSED LANGUAGE

Households will be assessed based on the caretaker(s) ability to parent a child in foster care. Other children and adults who are a part of the household will be evaluated on the basis of how they will affect the successful development of a child in foster care. Individual placement decisions will be made on a case by case basis in the best interest of the child.